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U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Citizenship and Immigration Services

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ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS OFFICE

CIS, AAO, 20 Mass. 3/F

425 I Street N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20536

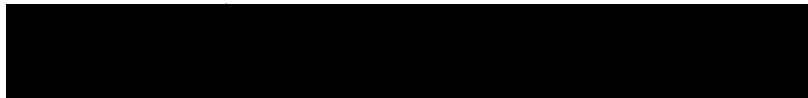


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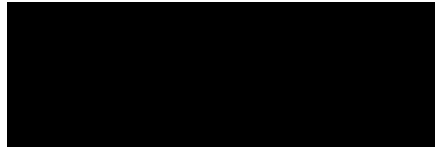
Date:

IN RE: Petitioner:
Beneficiary:



Petition: Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker as a Skilled Worker or Professional Pursuant to section 203(b)(3) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(3)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:



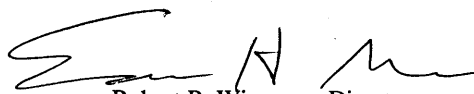
INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision in your case. All documents have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Any further inquiry must be made to that office.

If you believe the law was inappropriately applied or the analysis used in reaching the decision was inconsistent with the information provided or with precedent decisions, you may file a motion to reconsider. Such a motion must state the reasons for reconsideration and be supported by any pertinent precedent decisions. Any motion to reconsider must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider, as required under 8 C.F.R. § 103.5(a)(1)(i).

If you have new or additional information that you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reopen. Such a motion must state the new facts to be proved at the reopened proceeding and be supported by affidavits or other documentary evidence. Any motion to reopen must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reopen, except that failure to file before this period expires may be excused in the discretion of Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) where it is demonstrated that the delay was reasonable and beyond the control of the applicant or petitioner. *Id.*

Any motion must be filed with the office that originally decided your case along with a fee of \$110 as required under 8 C.F.R. § 103.7.


Robert P. Wiemann, Director
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The preference visa petition was denied by the Director, Vermont Service Center, and is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The petitioner is a restaurant. It seeks to employ the beneficiary permanently in the United States as a specialty cook. As required by statute, the petition is accompanied by a Form ETA 750, Application for Alien Employment Certification, approved by the Department of Labor. The director determined that the petitioner had not established that it had the continuing ability to pay the beneficiary the proffered wage beginning on the priority date of the visa petition.

On appeal, counsel submits a brief.

Section 203(b)(3)(A)(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1153(b)(3)(A)(i), provides for the granting of preference classification to qualified immigrants who are capable, at the time of petitioning for classification under this paragraph, of performing skilled labor (requiring at least two years training or experience), not of a temporary or seasonal nature, for which qualified workers are not available in the United States.

8 C.F.R. § 204.5(g)(2) states in pertinent part:

Ability of prospective employer to pay wage. Any petition filed by or for an employment-based immigrant which requires an offer of employment must be accompanied by evidence that the prospective United States employer has the ability to pay the proffered wage. The petitioner must demonstrate this ability at the time the priority date is established and continuing until the beneficiary obtains lawful permanent residence. Evidence of this ability shall be either in the form of copies of annual reports, federal tax returns, or audited financial statements.

Eligibility in this matter hinges on the petitioner's ability to pay the wage offered as of the petitioner's priority date, which is the date the request for labor certification was accepted for processing by any office within the employment system of the Department, and continuing until the alien is granted permanent residence. The petitioner's priority date in this instance is April 26, 2001. The beneficiary's salary as stated on the labor certification is \$12.00 per hour or \$24,960.00 per year.

With the petition, counsel submitted an partially illegible copy of the petitioner's Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 1120S for 2000.

In a request for evidence (RFE) dated November 13, 2001, the director requested evidence of the petitioner's ability to pay the proffered wage. In response, counsel submitted another illegible copy of Form 1120S for 2000 and copies of the petitioner's bank statements for April and May of 2001.

The director determined that the evidence did not establish that the petitioner had the ability to pay the proffered wage from the time the priority date was established and continuing until the beneficiary obtains lawful residency.

On appeal, counsel asserts that CIS ignored the other sources of money available to the business, namely depreciation.

In determining the petitioner's ability to pay the proffered wage, CIS will first examine the net income reflected on the petitioner's federal income tax return, without consideration of depreciation or other expenses. Reliance on federal income tax returns as a basis for determining a petitioner's ability to pay the proffered wage is well established by both CIS and judicial precedent. *Elatos Restaurant Corp. v. Sava*, 632 F.Supp. 1049, 1054 (S.D.N.Y. 1986) (citing *Tongatapu Woodcraft Hawaii, Ltd. v. Feldman*, 736 F.2d 1305 (9th Cir. 1984); see also *Chi-Feng Chang v. Thornburgh*, 719 F.Supp. 532 (N.D. Texas 1989); *K.C.P. Food Co., Inc. v. Sava*, 623 F.Supp. 1080 (S.D.N.Y. 1985); *Ubeda v. Palmer*, 539 F.Supp. 647 (N.D. Ill. 1982), *Aff'd*, 703 F.2d 571 (7th Cir. 1983).

In *K.C.P. Food Co., Inc. v. Sava*, the court also held that CIS, then the Immigration and Naturalization Service, had properly relied upon the petitioner's net income, as stated on the petitioner's corporate income tax returns, rather than the petitioner's gross income. *Id.* at 1084. The court specifically rejected the argument that CIS should have considered income before expenses rather than net income. Therefore, contrary to counsel's assertion, depreciation will not be considered, and thus, the petitioner cannot establish its ability to pay the proffered wage this way.

Additionally, CIS does not consider the petitioner's long-term assets and liabilities in evaluating its ability to pay the proffered wage, as it does not assume or expect the petitioner will sell those assets in order to pay the proffered wage.

Even though the petitioner submitted its commercial bank

statements to demonstrate that it had sufficient cash flow to pay the proffered wage, there is no proof that they somehow represent additional funds beyond those of the tax returns and financial statements. Simply going on record without supporting documentary evidence is not sufficient for purposes of meeting the burden of proof in these proceedings. See *Matter of Treasure Craft of California*, 14 I&N Dec. 190 (Reg. Comm. 1972).

Counsel maintains that *Matter of Sonegawa*, 12 I&N Dec. 612 (Reg. Comm. 1967) is analogous to the instant petition.

Matter of Sonegawa, relates to petitions filed during characteristically unprofitable or difficult years but only within a framework of profitable or successful years. The petitioning entity in *Sonegawa* had been in business for over 11 years and routinely earned a gross annual income of about \$100,000.00. During the year in which the petition was filed in that case, the petitioner changed business locations, and paid rent on both the old and new locations for five months. There were large moving costs and also a period of time when the petitioner was unable to do regular business. The Regional Commissioner determined that the petitioner's prospects for a resumption of successful business operations were well established. The petitioner was a fashion designer whose work had been featured in *Time* and *Look* magazines.

Her clients included Miss Universe, movie actresses, and society matrons. The petitioner's clients had been included in the lists of the best dressed California women. The petitioner lectured on fashion design at design and fashion shows throughout the United States and at colleges and universities in California. The regional Commissioner's determination in *Sonegawa* was based in part on the petitioner's sound business reputation and outstanding reputation as a couturiere.

In addition, counsel refers to an unpublished decision. While 8 C.F.R. § 103.3(c) provides that CIS precedent decisions are binding on all CIS employees in the administration of the Act, unpublished decisions are not similarly binding. Precedent decisions must be designated and published in bound volumes or as interim decisions. 8 C.F.R. § 103.9(a).

Beyond the decision of the director, it is noted that the petitioner failed to establish that the beneficiary had the requisite experience of two years as a cook as listed on the ETA-750. The experience letter submitted with the petition does not specifically describe the duties the beneficiary performed for the former employer, nor does it identify the writer of the letter. As the appeal will be dismissed on the grounds discussed above, this matter will not be discussed further.

The petitioner is obliged by 8 C.F.R. § 204.5(g)(2) to demonstrate the petitioner's continuing ability to pay the proffered wage beginning on the priority date. The evidence submitted does not demonstrate that the petitioner was able to pay the proffered wage during 2001. Therefore, the petitioner has not established that it has had the continuing ability to pay the proffered salary beginning on the priority date.

The burden of proof in these proceedings rests solely with the petitioner. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1361. The petitioner has not met that burden.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.